

**Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)  
Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)  
Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)  
WISE COUNTY/TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP WATER SHORTAGE  
SITUATION REPORT # 14  
1200 Hours October 21, 2005**

***New Information in Bold Italics***

***Next Conference Call is scheduled for Monday, October 24, 2005, 0930 hours  
Information for Situation Report should be submitted to the VEOC no later than 1000 hours daily***

**WEATHER**

***Forecast:***

**Southwest VA:** Partly cloudy with isolated showers in the AM, then mostly cloudy with scattered showers and thunderstorms in the PM. High temperatures in the upper 60's to low 70's, Southwest winds 10 MPH or less with 50% chance of rain. Tonight - Showers and Thunderstorms likely in the evening, then a chance of showers after midnight, Low temperatures in the low 50's, light winds, chance of rain 70%.

**NWS Morristown TN Hazardous Weather Outlook - 21 Oct 05:**

**Southwest VA - Day One (Today and Tonight)**

Cold front will move across the area late this afternoon and this evening. Scattered to numerous showers and thunderstorms are expected to develop along the front. Dangerous cloud-to-ground lighting strikes will accompany any thunderstorm.

**Days Two through Seven (Saturday through Thursday)**

Much colder air mass will move into the area behind the front. Low temperatures on Sunday night, Monday night, and Tuesday night could fall to near freezing across Southwest VA and Northeast TN, especially in sheltered valleys.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION**

***EOC Activation:***

The Virginia VEOC is at Increased Readiness condition and augmented with limited staffing.

***State of Emergency:***

On October 7, 2005, Governor Mark R. Warner declared a state of emergency to exist for Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to assist these localities in responding to a critical water shortage. Governor Warner directed appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of the state government to respond to needs in Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to alleviate adverse conditions created by the water shortage.

Executive Order 99 (2005) has been amended to impose an Open Burning Ban on Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap, effective immediately and continuing until such time as local officials advise the Governor it should be lifted.

***Local Situation:***

**Local Emergency Declared:** Wise County declared a local emergency on September 26, 2005.

**Local Emergency Declared:** Scott County declared a local emergency on October 15, 2005, specifying agricultural drought. There is no indication that this situation will impact the provision of 250,000 gallons of water per day by Scott County to Big Stone Gap.

**STATE AGENCIES**

**Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)**

A VDEM Hazardous Materials Officer is coordinating with Wise County, the Town of Big Stone Gap, and state/local agencies to identify needed resources and continue logistical support. A VDEM Reservist is on site at the Wise County Command Post to assist with logistics and finance.

The VEOC is coordinating requests for assistance from the locality and state agencies and compiling a list of available resources.

The VEOC is facilitating conference calls with the locality and state agencies.

### **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**

VDH is preparing kits for personal care workers, and supplying home delivered meals that contain water suitable for disabled populations, baby wipes and sanitizer.

The Virginia Department of Health Roanoke Regional Public Information Officer (PIO) is on scene to coordinate public information dissemination.

The Office of Drinking Water has offered to help the Town of Big Stone Gap test water. Water tests are ongoing. Additional samples were taken to test for sodium levels. Until further notice, the boil water notice is still in effect for the Central area of the town.

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) has been put on alert for possible activation to assist the special needs shelter.

Three Public Service Announcements were translated into Spanish yesterday for distribution in BSG. Follow-up press release issued clarifying the elevated sodium in the water in parts of Big Stone Gap and giving comparisons to high sodium content found in soft drink beverages.

Receiving reports daily from Big Stone Gap Water Treatment Plant on water monitoring from blivets and other stored water supplies.

VDH is encouraging local hotels to remain connected to the town's water supply.

The local health department began active surveillance for vomiting/diarrhea illnesses; monitoring absentees at 3 schools in Big Stone Gap daily, comparing with other county schools. No increase noted at this time.

The Office of Drinking Water has identified two wells in Appalachia as emergency water supply sources for town of Appalachia.

***VDH reports 10 cases of Chicken Pox at the Big Stone primary and middle schools.***

***VDH will discuss vaccinations for students at these schools.***

### **Virginia National Guard (VNG)**

The VNG continues distribution and blivet support mission. The nine blivets are placed at the following locations: one at each of the three public schools, one at the Hospital, one at the Nursing Home, one serving the community college/DMME, one at the Special Needs Shelter, and two supporting the Portable Water Processing Plants.

***Additionally, one blivet tasked to go to Bullitt Park. The VNG is maintaining the blivets. Health department has certified water quality.***

***A plan has been implemented to replace the pump at the cave site due to it failing last night at 2320 hrs. The 350-gpm pump at the cave site has been replaced and is pumping water as scheduled. Sixteen soldiers remain on mission.***

### **Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)**

Monitoring Powell River water flow. The river should not be lost as a source, yet the amount withdrawn will decrease the water level. DEQ can reconsider the 10% drawdown limit, if needed and requested, but should be a last resort. The water level is bouncing between 15-16 cubic feet per second or approximately 9.69-10.33 million gallons per day.

### **State Fire Marshal's Office**

The State Fire Marshal's Office contacted 12 building owners with sprinkler systems fed by Big Stone Gap as identified by the VDEM/Big Stone Gap task group. Faxed and/or mailed these building owners a Question and Answer sheet on what to do and who to contact should they lose water supply to their sprinkler system.

### **Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC)**

The VDOC is refilling blivets and have successfully transported one million gallons of water per week by tanker to the affected areas.  
Powell Valley Primary, Middle and High Schools will be topped-off every weekend.  
***The primary school consumed approximately 10,000 gallons of water this week. Middle and High school have consumed lesser amounts.***  
WRSP also committed to transport an additional 200,000 gallons of water weekly to support the residents on Wallens Ridge Mountain.  
DOC providing the Town with 200,000 gallons from tank at Wallens Ridge for use at DMME and MECC.

**Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)**

VDOT has 4 message boards in the Big Stone Gap area.  
A VDOT tractor is being used to pull stainless steel tankers of water.

**Department of General Services/Consolidated Labs**

***Clinch Haven Farm additional bacteriological tests are being conducted, and expect results October 22.***

**Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)**

The VDOF is putting up signs and enforcing the burn ban placed into effect by the Governor in the town limits of Big Stone Gap and the County of Wise. The VDOF will also enforce the burn ban for those areas of Big Stone Gap that are within Scott County.

**Virginia Department Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services (VDMHMRAS)**

***Polly Summit and Pierce House Group Home residents are returning from Camp Bethel today.***

**LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

The Town of Big Stone Gap installed a 6-inch water line connecting to the Town of Appalachia's water system. ***Testing should be complete today and the system is expected to be turned on tomorrow, Saturday October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The second plant is operational and water samples are being collected today.***

***Hairy Hole Cave resumed pumping water today. To date, 1.2 million gallons of water has been pumped from the cave. A meter was installed at the site today to monitor daily output.***

***Permanent connection is complete from the Norton/ Big Stone Gap water line.***

***The system is providing 100,000 gallon per day.***

***VA Rural Water Association circuit riders have identified 2 large leaks in the system – one at Beammon Town and the other at MECC. MECC is off the town's water system. -***

***Big Stone water plant reduced water output Thursday to 975,000 gallons.***

A distribution site opened at Town Hall October 18, 2005 to distribute bottled water to individuals on a low sodium diet. Three gallons per family, for low-sodium diets. Distribution daily from 2 PM – 8 PM and will end 21 October. The distribution method is in the process of being reevaluated.

Mt. Empire Older Citizen organization delivering bottled water to citizens with no transportation as well as special needs citizens.

The Town identified a spring, Parsons Cave, near water treatment plant as resource to serve as a back-up supply system. Water samples to be collected 24 October.

***The Town of Big Stone Gap plans to issue a public service announcement requesting residencies and businesses continue conserving water.***

***The county is moving water from the armory to a vacant manufacturing facility in Wise. The county expects delivery of 88 pallets of water on Monday.***

***Heritage Hall nursing home connected to a blivet and is off the town's water system.***

***Wise County's Sheriff department guarding blivets daily with increased patrol  
the weekend of 30-31 Oct. 05***

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